

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Josefina Cortezan, former nurse, housewife

Josefina Cortezan, Ilocano, was born February 28, 1896 in Candon, Ilocos Sur. She was trained as a nurse in the Philippines and worked there for over a year before coming to Hawaii in 1921. She worked at Palama Settlement and in Ewa.

She met and married Reverend C.C. Cortezan in 1921. He was called to Kauai in 1922. Josefina followed him to Lihue after her nursing replacement had been trained and after she'd given birth to a premature baby.

In 1923, they moved to Koloa. She assisted with plantation public health nursing, raised four children, and has been active in community affairs. She still lives in Koloa and is currently involved in senior citizens activities.

NOTES FROM UNRECORDED INTERVIEW

with

JOSEFINA (ABAYA) CORTEZAN

Koloa, Kauai

March 8, 1978

BY: Gael Gouveia and Chad Taniguchi

Mrs. Josefina Cortezan, Ilocano, is the widow of Reverend C. C. Cortezan, minister on Kauai in early 1922. Mrs. Cortezan married in 1921 and moved to Koloa in January, 1923. She was a plantation nurse in the hospital and helped with new programs, such as "Well Baby" Clinics. She also helped the courts and social workers. She has been long active in the community with senior citizens, YWCA, University Extension, etc. Her husband worked for the Board of Missions and was a social welfare worker.

In 1924, strike leaders, mainly from Honolulu, were friends of the Cortezans and visited in their home; however, striking and business were not subjects of conversation when they got together as friends. Isidoro Baring, one of the strike leaders, was a Visayan from Cebu; he did not work for the plantation but lived in Koloa for a time. Mrs. Cortezan suggests that it was mostly single people (strikers) who were housed at the old Japanese Language School in Hapapepe; that striking families were in Kapaa.

She said there was tension and fear during the time of the strike. She also said it was a disgrace for the dead Filipino strikers to have been buried in a mass grave. Mrs. Cortezan said that she'd heard that the "policemen shoot first."

Tape No. 5-26-1-78

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Josefina Cortezan (JC)

November 1, 1978

Koloa, Kauai

BY: Gael Gouveia (GG)

GG: This is an interview with Mrs. Cortezan in her home in Koloa. The date is November 1, 1978. The interviewer is Gael Gouveia.

Okay, Mrs. Cortezan, I wonder if you'd repeat for the tape when your birthdate is.

JC: I was born on February 28, 1896, at Candon, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. That's in Luzon, island of Luzon.

GG: And when did you first come to Hawaii?

JC: I came to Hawaii---we reach Hawaii on February 4, 1921. And it took us over a month to get to Honolulu at that time, because by ship, we spent few days in Hong Kong, few days in Shanghai, and Nagasaki and Kobe and Yokohama. Then to Honolulu, was the longest we were on the sea.

GG: Do you remember the name of the ship that you came on?

JC: From Philippines to Hong Kong....what was the name of that ship? It was a smaller one. I cannot remember. But from Hong Kong to Honolulu was the SS Tenyo-maru. The other one was....English one. That's the one that comes quite often to Manila.

GG: And did you come as a single lady?

JC: Yeah, I did.

GG: And were you already a trained nurse at this time?

JC: Yes, I had been working with the (Methodist Episcopal Mission) at first, when I graduated in 1915, I worked about a year in my own town. Because I was the first nurse who went on training, I mean graduate nurse. And nobody ever wanted me to go, not my family and my friends. And I did not know how hard it was to study nursing.

GG: It must have been very unusual for you as a young girl to go into nursing at that time in the Philippines.

JC: Yeah, that's true. Well, the one that influenced me on going--you see, the Methodist-Episcopal church was our church. And we had a convention in our town. And a graduate nurse from Mary J. Johnston Memorial Hospital came over. Well, I might say that in those days, in the Philippines, whether you are a boy or a girl, when you went away from home to school, somebody must accompany you. You cannot travel by yourself. Always did want to travel alone. So when this girl came, this nurse, I looked at her, she looked so nice to me. Because she had the uniform. In those days, when the nurses went out, you wear complete uniform. You have your cap, you have your pin, you have your white dress, white shoes. She looked so nice to me, I was so impressed. She gave a talk of some of her experience too. And I just decided I wanted to be a nurse, not knowing how hard it was. My family always said, my relatives, "Why do you want to be a nurse, go nurse school, you are so lazy." (Laughs) "You don't know."

Of course, those days, they would take---you see, when we finish seventh grade, we are ready for high school. In those days they were trying to get as many women--either mature or young--to get to school. Because all of our subjects were mainland ones. Anyway, I wanted to go and my family said, "No, no, no, you cannot do that." And even our friend who was a doctor--my mother's friend, he was the doctor (in our town). He'd say he'd never heard about young girls going to take up nursing. Of course he didn't know that we were supposed to study. He said all the ones that he knows in the (San Juan de Dios) Hospital were the old men who takes care of the patients where he trained. But I made up my mind, just wanting to go, now knowing (how hard it was).

So my mother said, "Well, since you are so decided to go, you may go. But no complaints. I don't want to hear any complaints." And that pulled me through.

GG: So who accompanied you?

JC: Well, my mother brought me. But the next time when I went home for vacation I went alone.

GG: How far did you have to go to study nursing, then?

JC: I had to go to the city of Manila first. In those days, when you travel, from my town to where the train was, how many days it took to go by bullcart. You know, like the covered wagon--this cow...to bring you. I think must be not quite two days.

GG: From in the country where you lived to where you could catch the train?

JC: I think it was at San Fernando, La Union.

GG: Was your family a farming---they had property? What did your father do?

JC: Well....he just managed what they own. He managed what he own. But my father died when I was seven years old. So my mother had raised up four children--my older sister and me. My older sister now lives in Canada with one of her daughters. And she has a son who is a psychiatrist. His wife is psychologist and they live in Edmonton. Of course, they got their doctor's degree from (the University of the Philippines and did graduate work at some) university in the Mainland. A girl and a brother after me. Our brother was just about not quite two years old when our father died. So that left my mother to take care of us. She had lots of privileges that was not given to other girls of her time. Because she had a grand uncle who was a priest. We had many relatives who were priests. In those days...

GG: In the Episcopal Church?

JC: No, no. From a Roman Catholic Church. Because there was no Protestant Church until the Americans came. During the Spanish time it was all one church. So she (our mother) grew up with her brothers, cousins like that in the convent. That's why they were taught how to be ladies. When I mean ladies was how to entertain (be gracious hostess) and how to do and act like that. Their family (the grand-uncle) the oldest sister took care of the infant brother after the mother died. They were not the type that--I might say, according to what they told us, they were very just like ordinary people, (in spite of their social status) and respect people no matter what social state they were. So that was to be my particular family. We were taught to respect everybody. That was great, when my mother became a Protestant (Methodist) her relatives did not like it, because we were poor by that time. We were poor because my mother wanted us to be educated and used almost all she had while our rich relatives, the girls, when they know how to read and write, that was enough.

GG: Now, your nurse's training must have cost something. How was that paid for?

JC: In those days, because we work, everything was free except our ordinary clothes. We got uniforms and dormitory and subsistence was free. But all other expenses your family has to carry it on. Well, I didn't have the age to get to the hospital when I went. They do not take if you are not 16. So I spent one year at the Methodist church Deaconese training school where they would help you so when you grow up, something about the Bible and other things, how to get along. So I stayed one year. As soon as I was 16, I moved to the hospital.

GG: I see. And then how long did your nursing...

JC: Three years. And we had probation for three months. And I'm

telling you (Laughs) if you cannot do that three months, for all the dirty work you had to learn, plus going to classes, you cannot go through. But it was pretty good. I'm glad I went because then I found myself, I could be little bit more useful.

GG: When did you graduate, then, from nurse's training?

JC: 1915. (March)

GG: And then you said you worked for a year.

JC: About a year (as a missionary nurse in my town). Because I had younger sister. My older sister--now when did she get married? She was teaching also in the public school, and she got married. Then I was thinking that maybe we spent so much so I decided to find a job that would pay me little bit more so I can share. Give some to my family and my sister and brother.

GG: And then how did you hear about Hawaii, or how did you decide to come?

JC: Well, I was working with the Department of Health. I mean, we call it Philippine Health Service. (The Department) needed pioneer workers in public health. Seems to me that's what I have been doing, all right. (Laughs) I was starting something. At Mary J. Johnston Hospital we were trained as midwives so we can help the local people, younger generation, to do....well, you might say "the American way." Not the old style way. I didn't care so much. Well, we were given allowance of 10 pesos, which is \$5 a month. But it did not matter to me because I was living at home. And it was easier. But also, I was feeling over worked all the time, because when somebody would come and ask for help, you know. I would go. It was funny, that time, I never thought about being scared. People would come from different villages and sometimes nighttime. But one thing we used to say, we were taught that if a doctor is taking care of the patient, unless a doctor ask, we do not meddle with them, about their treatment. But it seems to me that most of my relatives were my first patients.

(Laughter)

Anyway, my first baby was a foot presentation. I'm telling you, I had to pray hard and made sure that what I asked them they must be ready, when I need something. And well, so far everything was successful. And I'm sure that the Lord said that when you are starting something, you must show something. Because after that, oh, plenty of my relatives and friends---you know, from my town went for nursing at different hospitals. Like San Juan de Dios, Mary Childs, Mary Johnston, some more hospitals.

One of the missionary (Dr. Daniel Klinefilter, in Honolulu) was in the Philippines first. We know him well because he's in the same denomination that we were. He knows that I graduated from the

hospital already. I was working. So when he came to the Philippines to visit, the plantations asked him--HSPA, now--asked him if he could ask some of the nurses from there to come and help. Because the Filipinos who came first did not speak English. Mostly and they didn't have confidence, for the doctor, not knowing the language. And the common words that they say, "When you go to the hospital, that's for good. You never come home." Naturally, because they won't go until it is the last, too late. And they won't take the medicine, they were not sure what kind. They accept but they won't take.

So this Dr. Klinefilter came and he came to the office where I was working. And he waited, he said, "Josefina--that's my name--how would you like to go to Hawaii?"

Well at that time I had applied to go to the leprosarium in the Philippines. You know, we had like Kalaupapa. I was thinking of going there because I was tired of doing this work. But he said, "Well, we always think but we didn't know what is Hawaii." It was Honolulu, "How do you like to come to Honolulu?"

I didn't know about different islands. Honolulu is Honolulu. And Honolulu, the next state is San Francisco. And we had nurses--graduates from our hospital--lived in the Mainland for post-graduate work. So I said, "That's good, I always wanted to go to the Mainland so maybe if I can save some money, I can go over." So I had three other girls. Two were graduates from the Christian Mission Hospital, one besides me from our hospital--Mary Johnston. [Name of hospital.]

So we were talking. "Hey," I said, "this missionary came and asked if you want to go to Hawaii." Because they need help badly, you know. They had two Filipino nurses, one at the HSPA Immigration Station, I think. Where they process the people who come in. And another one at Waialua Plantation Hospital. Both girls graduated from St. Luke's Hospital. "What, you want to go?" They asked me.

"Yeah, I want to go." Because my mind was going forward.

"Oh, if you are going, we like to go too." So....supposed to be five of us. But one got married before we started so she couldn't come; so four came.

GG: How did your mother react to your coming?

JC: She said if I wanted to come I---it was all right.

GG: So the four of you girls came together?

JC: Yeah, we came together. And there were two families also. One is a Methodist minister and his family, and the other one worked for the Hawaiian Board of Mission which is Congregational. So we had a nice group. And came together.

GG: And then, when you arrived in Honolulu...

JC: When we arrived in Honolulu, one of the girls went to Lahaina, Maui. Another one went to Waipahu. The other one went to Kahuku. I stayed first in Honolulu (at the Susannah Wesley Home for Girls) because they thought...when the nurse in the immigration station, they know she would be leaving after year ended. This Dr. Klinefilter wanted me to stay in Honolulu. Of course, after working maybe I could help them with the church too. But after a few weeks the manager, Mr. George Renton, Jr., from Ewa went to Dr. Klinefilter and he said, "You have another Filipino nurse. Why are you keeping her in Honolulu?" (Laughs) He said, "We need her because our laborers are trying to move out to go either to Waipahu or to Waialua where they had a Filipino nurse." He said, "How about letting her come to us, because we need badly."

So he talked to me. Well, I didn't know any difference. When we were in the Philippines we thought that we (the four nurses) are going to live together like in the city. And go out to where you will work. So we were talking about maybe we can rent a cottage. Maybe we can have somebody to do our cooking for us when we go to work, and somebody clean house and somebody do the laundry. And then, when we were separated, we could not say anything because we didn't know how far it was.

GG: And you had no choice; they just went and assigned you.

JC: Yeah. The girls, they stayed in the hospital. Of course, the nurses there too, they did not treat them well. They were so disappointed because they did not get (respect) from the other people, from the graduate nurses, they were not treating them the way they are accustomed to be treated in the Philippines. It was quite a change, I might say.

When I was in Honolulu I stayed at Susannah Wesley Home. With some of the girls in there, it's a home for girls. And then, the first contact I had with Honolulu people was with the Palama Settlement. At that time, they were going to make some survey among the homes in different places. So they sent me to the Palama District to try and survey. Go from house to house and find out how they were, how many Filipinos or Chinese or whatever in the same building. And when I went there was an old Chinese man. And he began talking Chinese. He asked me, "Are you pake?"

"What's pake?" I don't know what that is.

(Laughter)

I was trying hard, and finally I told him, "No, I'm Filipino." I figure out that maybe he wanted to hear me talk (in Chinese). I said, "I'm sorry, I cannot speak but English." Of course, we managed to talk about how many people in the building, how many girls, there were men or women or children. There was my first

experience. And....I mean, don't put them down. I'm just telling you.

In the home, of course I ate with the director and the other missionaries. And I did not know---I'm not used to, when lunch time or dinner time or breakfast, like that, you know how a family da kine, eh. You want to pick up what you want to eat. I was not used to this being served with so much and no more.

(Laughter)

And they used to kid me, the girls, the other nurses. She said, one time when where we were---oh, when I was still in the other school. And one of the girls from my town said, "What you waiting for?"

"I'm waiting for the next course."

She said, "No more. That's it."

"Why didn't you tell me? I could have eaten so slow.

(Laughter)

GG: When did you go to Ewa, then?

JC: So after few weeks I went to Ewa.

GG: How long were you there?

JC: Just about year and a half. No, I didn't quite make my two years so I could get free transportation to go back home. But I lived with one minister and his wife. The minister at that time was sick, he was at Leahi Hospital. So this lady had two children--girl and a boy--and she did carry the work for the Filipinos. Many of them were---well, she comes from Iloilo but she could understand the others too. Her husband knows several Filipino dialects and Spanish and English. He was good. But he was sick at that time.

GG: Did you meet Reverend Cortezan while you were at Ewa?

JC: No. I never met him before. You see, when he came (to Hawaii, he told me that) he ran away from home. He was in high school and then he went and he studied at the mission school (in Jaro). At that time he said that the higher grades, when they're in high school, they could send them and teach in the outlying districts. But somehow, I don't know, he said---you see, from their island Panay, the HSPA cannot recruit laborers, because they had big sugar plantations. So they went to Cebu, in the Philippines, in the Visayan islands.

GG: Right, but what island was he from.

JC: Oh, he is from Iloilo, Panay, the island of Panay.

GG: And they couldn't recruit in that area because [they already had sugar plantations there. HSPA couldn't take laborers from existing plantations].

JC: They cannot, cannot and also in Negros, because of the plantations. They had plantations here too, owned by rich people.

He and some of his companions in the school said he they was helping them and teaching them. So they ran away but they changed their names. So they went to Cebu where they recruit. So their families could not follow them. Maybe they tried but there is no such name, eh, because they changed. Anyway, my husband was also an orphan at that time, both father and mother (were dead). He said his parents died when he was about nine, I think; or even younger. So his sisters took care of him. Anyway, when they were on the ship going to Manila, he said that they checked them up, the names. They had forgotten what names they gave. (Laughs) So then they keep calling those names and nobody answer. One of the fellows said, "I think that must be us." So they began answering the name. But when they reached Honolulu they put their real names, though. They changed to the real names in the mean time. So he was stationed at Waipahu first.

GG: As a plantation laborer?

JC: Yeah. But maybe he has that mind of trying to help people. So he started one night school for the people who wanted to learn.

GG: Which plantation was he at?

JC: Waipahu. He said the Hawaiian Board I think figured out he had some possibilities. So he was sent to Mill's school which is now the Mid Pacific Institute. Before, the boys and girls had different school. So he went there.

GG: Who sent him there to school?

JC: The Hawaiian Board of Mission. They trained them first, this what they call the Christian Workers' Institute. And they were the first graduates. (One was a) Chinese lady--Miss So. Another, a Hawaiian fellow--James Akimo--and himself [her future husband].

GG: How did the plantation let him get into that, though?

JC: I don't know how.

GG: They did permit it?

JC: They did. He left, and then went. After that, poor fellow, never get his diploma. But the Board sent him to Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley and to the University of California in Berkeley.

And then just he had few more (months to graduate), he left in January, 1921. He was supposed to graduate that June. But the Board said they were having problems in Honolulu. So they asked him if he can come back and help out. Maybe go back later. He always thought that he would go back, as I told to. So his friends --he made friends. He was there during the first world war. So he made friends with the people who went to the university and all that. But he said, before, they looked down on Filipinos who came from Hawaii. Because they are laborers. Until they found out that during the war and those people what we call "rich" in the Philippines, they don't do anything. And (where are) they (going to) get money from? Home? No mail. So they had to find work. He was with the YMCA and he was trying to help people find jobs. All these boys at first look down on him, we might say, because he came from Hawaii. Finally, he had to make friends and find out if he could help them to get jobs. So they were dishwashers. they were busboys. They were glad for that because they didn't have any work. For their expenses. Then finally, they had this Filipino students association at the University. One year, just before he came back to Hawaii, he was elected their president. So they was quite nice, eh.

Then the nurses who were there at that time (we know some of them) became his friends. So when he came back, we arrived on that same date. February 4, we arrived from Yokohama. He came (later from San Francisco). He said he was wondering why nobody, even his friends, went to meet him. They knew he was coming back. He didn't know we arrived. "And four mature girls, I have never seen that many," he said.

GG: "At one time..."

(Laughter)

GG: Single ladies.

JC: Yeah. Because few families. So next day they gave us a reception in Honolulu. And what a reception it was. He came too. Of course, the fellows who came to meet us....well, to tell you the truth, was before we left Philippines, the reputation of the Filipino men here was bad. Because they said they call them "cowboys" because you have heard about how they go with the families. The men who brought their families. There were very few that they did not touch. But there was a man and he could speak many dialects. I know because he came here too, in Kauai, and he used to come to our house. And they had--you know how easy the handguns and revolvers, those days. So he told us this, that's why I know. He said, "Oh, if the men spotted the wife of somebody and he said, 'Gee, I like that woman, What can you do?'" He's the big man to go and talk. So they'd go and talk to the woman. Naturally, they don't want to leave their husbands. Well, if they were not willing, they just take them. Yes or no, even if the husband is there. Because the husband couldn't say anything because there were several of them, eh. They were armed. So that was why even

these fellows who came to meet us were very nice, we kind of apprehensive, you know.

They didn't like him because when he came we didn't know him but he knew our friend, the nurses there. He start asking where these women came from the next day at the reception, and asked if we knew them. So we would say, "Yeah, it happened that we did." And we figured out, he must be all right if these girls like him. Two of those girls, I worked with them (in the Philippine Islands).

And the Filipinos in Honolulu, the single one, they used to have nice cars. And he has this old Model-T Ford that he was allowed use for his work.

Well, I don't know, we just felt close to him because of our friends. And the others, they invited us too but we tried to make excuses because we didn't know them at all. At the reception we told (the people) we came here because we like to help them, and all that. Boy, all the love letters we received. And some "pidgin," some all kinds. I kept them for a long time until one day I was cleaning out and I burned them all.

GG: Oh, what a shame.

JC: Yeah, it is. And people said, "Why didn't you keep it? It would be some classic." People we don't know, from all over the territory, where they had the Filipinos. I did receive quite a bit.

Well, he was known as--the people who didn't know him, the new people in the plantation, the Filipinos--they used to say he was our chauffeur. Because when we want to go someplace we just ask him. Poor man, he had no chance to decline. So he used to get, well, from Kahuku, he'd pick us up from Ewa, Waipahu. Honolulu, Ewa, Waipahu, Waialua, Kahuku. Or else, if you want to go to town, he start from the other end. We go, because we didn't know anybody.

GG: You felt safe, eh?

JC: We felt safe with him. And they had a big party for this nurse in Kahuku. So the people who knew him, the old timers, before he left (for California); he said he was so tired and so hungry. He brought us all to the party, except the Kahuku lady. So they made him, you know, because how they do. Come and eat and stuff. So they told him if he wanted to go around, help himself because they know this one. So he ate. And one fellow who never knew him said, "What's the driver of the nurses doing eating when all the other guests were not seated?" He went to tell him if he could please get up and maybe eat later. Hoo, he was mad like anything. Because he was hungry. But the men, when they had the program and they asked him to speak and all that, then the man was so sorry because he hadn't known.

Well, we ran out of gas and I had to go back so we can work next day. And you know, gas in the Philippines is this kerosene. It's not gasoline. Poor man, he wanted to help, he went, got some kerosene from his own, because the plantation used to bring kerosene or whatever they need. Firewood. He felt so bad he wanted to help, so he put some kerosene in the car and lent it us. And when he found that out again, that mistake worse. (Laughs) Anyway, this our story.

Because he comes from Waipahu and knows the old place where I was living. He was like their son before he left. He used to come around and....well, by October, we got married. And no more the plan to go to the Mainland. And you know, funny, the three of us got married--the one who were in Oahu. The one from Lahaina finally, she decided to go to the Mainland. She resigned and went to the Mainland. And she got married there. And then when her husband died, she went back to the Philippines.

GG: So you got married in...

JC: Yeah, October 9, (1921) in Ewa.

GG: And then, when did you come to Kauai?

JC: The following year, they had problem over here with---I don't know what it was. Anyway, (the Hawaiian Board) asked my husband to come over. So he came over here. I could not come with him because I had to wait for my replacement. At the same time, I had to show her around the job, because it's so different. And well, the one I recommended who wanted to come, because she told me that she would like to come if they needed, from our hospital. So I wrote to her. Unfortunately, her boyfriend came and he was studying medicine in the Mainland. When he came back they got married so she wrote, "You too late."

That's why they had to go look for another one. And it took time to get one. She was young, she was a young graduate; graduated the year when she came. Then when she arrived, I had to tell her, "You have to do this," like that, for the plantation. Which she never did. Like if there is delivery she has to---fortunately, I had some patients who was ready to deliver, so I showed her (what to do). All you need is have lots of hot water and boil all your instruments and everything. And just make as comfortable as you can, whether they are on the floor or lay in the bed. Or you put them on the table. Well, she didn't stay too long, I think about a year she left.

GG: So your husband came over here in 1922?

JC: Yeah, 1922. I think must be about March, or April, something like that.

GG: And then when did you come?

JC: Well, after I had---well, I was pregnant at that time. While I was teaching my replacement and all that, I had a premature baby. So, well she had to learn again how to deliver (a premature). So I had to tell her what to do; now I was the patient. Our first child was four pounds. And he really went down to almost three pounds, and grow back from three pounds. And you know, those days you had to improvise everything.

GG: That's right, especially if premature.

JC: Oil and wrap good. Cotton, hot water bag. Anyway, I could not leave until he was stronger. Because by ship, too. So of course, they wire my husband to come over. And fortunately there was a ship and it was leaving three times a week before, the ship. So when he arrived he didn't know my baby was born already. One thing, even the people who work in the hospital, they were surprised because one was cooking, one was preparing to wash, and they were cleaning, sweeping the floors. And they hear this big cry of a child. He really was lusty crier, so I was not too worried when I heard him crying. When the doctor came he said, "You're doing well." Anyway he gave permission. He said, "Take care of all deliveries." And he said they had midwives at that time, "Unless it's a hard case, then you bring them to the hospital and let me know."

I got here [Kauai] in September. He was stationed in Lihue but his district would include Koloa and Lawai.

GG: This was in September of 1922?

JC: 1922. Then we were in Lihue until Dr. A. H. Waterhouse, who was so anxious to move him to Koloa, because that was his district also. Well anyway, at that time too, he had this fight with the manager. You know, young fellows when they come from the Mainland and they came back here, the outlook is different. They can talk; they express more than....so in those days, was the time when payday they have small money. When payday, they have these runners from Honolulu or somebody in the camp--usually the camp police--arrange for these women to come. They tell the fellows that there would be some women around.

So he didn't like that. So he told that policemen he didn't like that their own men was....but you know, the manager, I guess he said that, "Well, that is what they need." He didn't see any wrong, so...

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

GG: Now, the church was already here when you moved here?

JC: When we moved his particular job would be with Filipinos mostly. Even in Lihue we used to have meeting in the Filipino hall. They used to have always some designated Filipino hall. And over here they had some old church, I think was the Korean church. By then there were few Koreans here but there was a church building that was used for a while.

GG: And that was the Methodist-Episcopal Church?

JC: No, that is the Congregational Church now. Because the Methodist, I understand in the early days they had a kind of agreement between the two Boards. That from....was it from Lawai-Kalaheo up to the other side was Methodist. In other words the island was--one side was Methodist, the other one was Congregational. It's up to Hanalei.

GG: So what was Koloa, and what was your husband then?

JC: Well, he was not an ordained minister, but he's just a Christian worker and social worker too, no, with all the problems of the Filipinos. So Dr. Waterhouse was anxious at the same time too, I think because I can help him with health problem. So he fixed this house, (part of the mission school, built by his grandfather, Dr. James Smith) he moved it from---it was under the big tamarind tree. And before he moved it then he fixed it, so we came. And we are still here. (Laughs)

I used to be so anxious to move, because the others (ministers), they move them so many years. I wanted to see other places. But no, they won't move him. Because Misses Elsie and Mabel Wilcox and others; all of them, they said, "No, no, don't move them. We need them here."

GG: So it was in the early part of 1924 when you came to Koloa?

JC: 1923. Yeah, January when we moved here. And then they always---what we used to do, those who don't understand English we have Filipino service. And of course my husband could speak the Ilocano dialect so he speaks in English so the younger people can understand. Then I had to interpret for him. And then after that, then we come and move with the English service. We used to have day or evening service too, with the other members because they had the minister here now for the Koloa church. It was not union church yet. We used to meet at the---you know where the white church is, that was the Hawaiian church. We all had services there. The Hawaiians were there, they have Sunday School. The English for the English-speaking. For Filipinos, we had the Filipino group.

GG: Usually, how many people would attend the services, say, in 1923, the Filipino services?

JC: Well, some of them were members of some Protestant churches in the Philippines. Then the others, we invite them and sometimes

they come. The children used to come regardless of what church they go.

GG: But would you maybe have like 50 or 20?

JC: No, not quite that many. Yeah, maybe about 20 or some more. In the beginning.

GG: And were they Ilocanos as well as Visayans; or only Ilocanos, or Tagalogs?

JC: Some Ilocanos, some Visayans. But the children, we had them in English Sunday School like that. Those who did not want to come over here--because of course our children would go there and then, because later we had to have earlier services.

And then we lived in that house until we moved here 1960.

GG: So how would--in order to increase membership or to get more people, did your husband go out into the community?

JC: Well, he did. Usually it was in the evening. Then my mother came from the Philippines, to come to visit us because we cannot afford to go. We had two children then. So we said it was easier for us for her to come. So she came and it was surprising, her health improved here. In the Philippines she was sickly. She has bills, bills, bills, for the doctor and medicine and all that. So her sisters and brothers and nieces and nephews and my father side said, "No, no, don't go. You might die on the way."

And she says, "Well."

"And they throw you out overboard. And the fish will eat you up."

"That's all right. I'll be dead. It doesn't matter to me."

And they would say, "Ah, you are hard head." And then they say, "Who shall we call?" As peacemaker for them. "When we have problems."

"Don't make problems." (Laughs) That's the answer she used to give them. "You can live more harmoniously. Don't have any problems." She was one type of person that people, when they have problems, family things, they'd come and see her. Even the older ones. So she would try and straighten out as much as she can.

(Telephone rings. Taping stops, then resumes.)

GG: When you were first living here did you work as a nurse at one of the hospitals here?

JC: No, no, no. I was always...

GG: You were raising your children?

JC: One, when the graduate nurse Koloa---before, every plantation had hospital. Then the Dr. Waterhouse asked me to go there maybe a week or so, something like that. And at that time, Miss Mabel Wilcox was our supervisor. I could not be employed by the health department because I was not a citizen. So they made it possible for me---they wanted me to work. Yeah, after my mother came (in 1925) our second boy died in 1926. He was only 16 months old. So my mother came for a vacation. But she seemed to---well, Mr. Schenk, I think you have heard that Norman Schenk used to be the Filipino supervisor for, missionary in charge of Filipino work. When he went to the Philippines, (he went to visit my mother) and by then they know that we are trying to get her to come to visit us. He said, "Oh, maybe you will stay there. Good if you come."

And she said, "No, I don't know. Depends how I get along with my son-in-law." You see, she never met him.

"Oh, no problem." But somehow they got along very well. So since nobody at home, well, she raised up my sister's oldest daughter when she was there. But she didn't bring her--she brought the oldest boy, who was ready to go to high school. She did so much more work here, more than when she was at home.

GG: She seemed busier.

JC: Yeah, it was surprising. So I think that was also another reason why she stayed. She was staying alone. Of course, they always can get some help.

GG: In the first year or so, did your husband's congregation begin to expand and grow?

JC: It grows some. Not as fast, but you see, to him he was not so interested about having numbers. He was more interested how much he can help them make their life a little better, improved. That was his (idea) all the time.

GG: Were any of the members that he worked with, were any of those the strikers, when the strike got under way?

JC: I think it must be that some of them. But you know, there was the war. Many of them had gone to Honolulu, moved. Many of them went because some of them could speak better English. They went to the Mainland. But we worked with the families. Plantation asked me if I could work with them, and then we had that new law. I forgot what it was, whose concern in Congress that started the work for Well Baby Clinics and mothers. And so the Board of Health, even I could not be employed, paid by them--later on I was, though, because they needed me. I always worked part-time. I had part-time for the plantation. Because when we had program for Well Baby Clinics and Mothers, then that day when we have the clinic here I am in Koloa, I don't go out. But I had been going out all through the

island where they had Filipino families. That's how I had been going. And since I could not be in the payroll of the Board of Health, the Wilcox Trust Fund put up the money with the YWCA for me, for my work. That's how, I work with the YWCA. YWCA too, I will be under them with the understanding that when we have camp, I am also camp nurse. Then also, when they have difficulty in the court, then I was also a court interpreter. Until now, I am still, when they need. Because there is still some Filipinos--especially in the high court. So they also call me. So I was everywhere.

GG: So when you were doing the Well Baby Clinic, would you go to the different plantation hospitals--that's where they had them?

JC: Yes. Where we had the clinics, in the camps. In the camps and visit the homes. Talk with the mothers. That's how with the old people now, I really enjoy with them. I mean the senior citizens because we worked together. And they remember. Also, we used to have camp with the fathers. They came really. Some of them, they still remember what fun we used to have.

GG: When you worked with them in the camp, you worked with all Filipinos, not just Ilocanos?

JC: No, not only Filipinos but anybody who was there for the clinic. But of course, the most would be with the Filipinos.

GG: What happened during the strike time, then; in 1924, did they still hold the Well Baby Clinics, but only for the people that stayed in the camps?

JC: Yeah, all that stayed behind. Yeah, I think so. I forgot the year when they started that Well Baby Clinic. So long time ago. But in 1921---in the mean time we used to have all those special conferences here in Hawaii, in Honolulu. The first one I went to, because just because maybe there were no more of....how you might say, they had this educational conference, Pan-Pacific (Women's Conference). Some from Philippines, Japan, China, all the South Pacific. And of course, I think they wanted to hear from somebody about the women in the Philippines. So I was asked to speak. You can imagine me speaking before those PhD's and MA's, but I tried my best. Because what they wanted to know I was able to explain. Because women in the Philippines, before, during the Spanish time, if your family can afford, they always hope that maybe somebody in the family could become a sister (nun); or you can become a teacher in schools, because they also had public schools at that time. So those are the two that you can be employed, and of course then, you have to be a housewife all the time. I mean, they expected that. And so I told them that after the Americans came more people wanted to go in professions. And then 1928, we had the first Pan-Pacific Women's Conference. So I was included in that because I guess [I knew] about the health problems. So I was a member. For five times I went as a voting delegate to the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference (Four in Honolulu and one in Vancouver, British Columbia). It was funny

when Pan-Pacific is over see--I belonged to the nurses' association, so when we had the conference of the nurses' association, I went to that, too. My husband said, "Well, if you have to go, go."

I said, "Well, I have no objection going." They pay the expenses. We had the social workers' conference. And so I had to go to that too. The social workers' conference would be under YWCA side because I do some---which I wasn't trained but from practical (point of view).

GG: Did all of these programs sort of develop after the 1924 strike period?

JC: I do not remember. The nurses' association, I suppose we always had. I don't remember when I joined. (I started working with the YWCA later in 1926--I also help to start work with the University Extension Service among the Filipino women on Kauai about 1929.)

GG: Do you remember much of anything about the strike?

JC: Well, we still did the same (working and translating recipes with the Home Agent). We still sort of, because people would come to our house for their problems, family problems, or whatever. And also, during the strike, my husband never sided anyone. Neither the plantation (nor the strikers). Just told them, "Do what you think is right." Because at that time too, the strike leaders---most of the Visayans talked because many of them were very strong. Some of the Ilocanos too did join some of them because if they did not join they'd call them all kinds of names. Even the children.

GG: I wondered if any of the Ilocanos came to your husband maybe complaining that the others were trying to force them into....

JC: We knew that some of them were coercing but some of them would come and see what we think, all that. The funny part was when they had meetings. Usually had dinner together before meeting. They all came to our house, at the other house. They all joke. They never mentioned anything about strike or anything. Plantation employees that are on responsible jobs, and the striker leaders, they were all friends. They all come and we all have dinner together. Sometimes they bring sort of potluck. Then after, when they go there, of course the plantation people let them talk whatever they want to say. They never did discuss with them, as far as the Filipino leaders (who came to our house).

GG: Do you remember who the Filipino leaders were?

JC: Of course, the main one from Honolulu was Mr. Pablo Manlapit. He was. Over here was Mr. Baring; Mr. Baring, I know. And I don't remember the others, who they were.

GG: Did Mr. Manlapit ever come to your house?

JC: Oh yes. They all come and we eat together.

GG: And what about Mr. Ligot, too?

JC: Mr. Ligot was the first labor commissioner. Oh yes, he used to come too. He used to come. So sometimes, some of the plantations who did not know my husband, they said, "Where does he stand?"

But fortunately some managers who were here at that time, they know him well so they said, "We are not worried about him." They had worry too sometimes because some of the others sided with the strikers. He said, "No, he get his own mind so we are not worried about him." Because that's really what he was. He never tell them go join or don't go and join. You had to weigh the....find your own mind.

GG: Did the strikers ever come to him for donations for food or money? I know sometimes they went out to collect.

JC: I don't remember that they came (to him for that).

GG: And do you remember anything about the march to Waimea? Supposedly they all from the Hanapepe strike camp marched up to Waimea over, I guess....two that were arrested for trespass charges.

JC: Well, they used to do some trespassing, but that I don't know. Because those involved in that Hanapepe riot, because some of them stayed in Kapaa. Many of the strikers stayed up at Kapaa. And they did not come over. Only those that were in Hanapepe, that old language school where they had to get them. I think mostly the Visayans, because the leaders were mostly Visayans.

GG: You were in Koloa at the time that the Hanapepe shooting took place?

JC: Uh huh. Oh yeah.

GG: Do you remember how either you or other Ilocanos felt about what happened, the shoot-out?

JC: You see, we were not there of course, but the policemen, they knew they were going to have problem, I think. You see, my husband used to tell our manager here, "Don't ever go there by yourself because they might misunderstand you." And of course, the leaders were from Koloa. So he didn't go. But the sheriff that time, deputy sheriff Mr. Crowell, the old man, sometimes....when things like that, speaking--when it does not strike you well, why, you get mad, eh?

But what they say--this is only what we heard--that the policemen were ready up in the hill. I think they were trying to protect the deputy sheriff. But when he went in there they kind of misunderstood what the strikers would do. What the leaders would do. Then

they were talking. I don't know how they talk, whether they were talking loud or not. Because the strikers would not shoot first. In fact, they didn't have enough of them that were carrying arms, eh. So the people up misunderstood that they might hurt Mr. Crowell. So they say, they started. Of course, the people at that time, I guess when they found out, it's either their life or somebody else's. But more Filipinos were shot. How many policemen?

GG: Four policemen and 16 Filipinos.

JC: As I told you before, they felt worse after. They just dug a hole without---although maybe they also have their religious belief. Most of them were Roman Catholic. And to be just dumped in one hole. Oh, were you able to see Reverend Runes?

GG: Yes, Chad has talked to him.

JC: Yeah, because I think he was there. My husband wasn't there.

GG: Do you know why your husband wasn't there?

JC: I don't know. Well, probably---I don't know why he wasn't there. But I know he didn't go. Maybe because it happened to be in Hanapepe. It's supposedly not his district to go. That bothered a lot of the Filipinos, because that was desecrated according to that belief. But that was unfortunate. Of course in those days too, they did not....most of the....well, it was better already then, though. But when the first shooting was (fired, some retaliated). I mean, this all hearsay but it could be true.

Where did they hang some Filipinos, and that's the worse thing that could happen. Because they always think about Judas Iscariot that hanged himself. Filipinos are not used to that hanging. It's the Japanese who is more common for that. Oh yeah, that was before. My husband came in 1913. And he said there was a time when they just hanged them. Or if they file charges against them, sometimes no more trial. And some of them had brought that feeling. So when they get touched, they don't care what happen. And the only arms Filipinos used to have before was their knives. They used to be called "poke knife." Because that's all they did. If there was somebody who cross them, they get mad and they act very fast. That's why, during the last world war, you know how they used to throw cars in the dump--they say, because I did not see--but people who used to make, they used to get all the shrimp, which are good steel, sharpen them into this long (knife). In fact, we had one there, I think. It's all rusted. But they were preparing because they didn't know about shooting. But at least they said if they don't get them first, they can get somebody.

GG: Did you ever see? There was supposedly a strike camp in Koloa, at....I think there was a Filipino newspaper office, or Japanese labor paper office.

JC: There was an office, you know where the mortuary is here? I think they had the Japanese---I don't know how long--but I know when we moved here they had a newspaper in Japanese. The Filipino paper was run by Abraham Abayalde first, was in Lihue. Not in Koloa, not that I know of.

GG: But was there a strike camp in Koloa?

JC: No, no strike camp.

GG: Only at Hanapepe.

JC: Hanapepe and Kapaa.

GG: Did you ever pass by the strike camp in Hanapepe?

JC: Oh yeah. They didn't bother us. Because I guess they had no reason to. Because the real strike leaders were from Koloa, outside, not plantation men. They are not working for the plantation. The leaders that were here were not working for the plantation. Maybe later on they would have some other people.

GG: But the leaders stayed here in Koloa.

JC: Yeah.

GG: That was Baring, was one.

JC: Yeah. He was the strongest. Then some of the Visayans later on, they had the...

GG: Do you remember the names of any of the others?

JC: No, I don't.

GG: Did you have any reason or come into contact with any of the strikers at all, anytime during the strike?

JC: Well, those that lived in the camp, yeah, I had. But the only thing is some of them that had---wives, some thrifty or they had earned some money by doing something. Washing clothes and all that. They had saved some. I knew that many of them had used all their savings for buying food because the rations were not adequate if they had children. After, of course, they had funds. I don't know where it came from, that funds. For buying food and all that. Those who had money, they ate better than those that didn't have. Because they spent their own. I mean, they could buy more than what is allotted to them. And of course, during the strike they could go fishing. Each one of them were good fishermen. And then they passed the law that aliens cannot, that they could not go and fish. So we have this story, somewhere in Kapaa, that the man went fishing so he was arrested. So he told the judge, "I'm not eating the fish. Your citizens are eating. My children all citizens, I

have to feed them." I don't know how true that is but that was, I have heard that. Because he said, "If you want me to jail, well who'll take care my children. Not for me, the citizens."

GG: Did your husband have very much contact with the plantation management in terms of, say, did they come to him and say, "Can you do things to help the Filipinos to maybe quiet down the strike?"

JC: I don't know, but you see, the plantation was concerned about them too, they can lose something, a check, sort of a welfare help for the people. It was a little different here than from other place. Koloa, as far as we were concerned. Because he had a good rapport, or something like that, with the plantation. They understand him, he understands them. And the people at that time who were here were more human, I think, than some other places.

GG: At the plantations?

JC: At the plantation level. Of course, I could not help but....in all that because that was in those days like that, you were paid according to the color of your skin. Even ministers were like that. So they used some of the people we know. There would be white men who come here who did not know anything, and these poor Filipinos would be helping him, tell him about the job. Because they had lunas, too, eh, among the Filipinos. And they'd feel bad because he'd be receiving much more money than they had, and there, they were teaching him what to do. But those were the days.

GG: Your husband's salary, did that come from the Board of Missions?

JC: Part of it. Used to be before, the plantations donate some, contribute some money, and then they had their own fund and they supplement. Because I know of all the Filipino ministers, he was the only one not ordained. He didn't want to be ordained as a minister before 1942. In 1942, he was persuaded to be ordained. Our youngest boy was born already. The Board said they didn't have enough ordained people they need. He could do funerals, and he could do....he had no license to marry. He didn't want to, because of the situation then. But of course, after he was ordained and then they talked to him and said yeah. Because they needed to. If that will, I think his philosophy, cause less trouble if they get them legally, then(Laughs) Because he didn't believe in divorce. And because some, of course they get divorced without any good reason. But really, his salary used to come---plantation used to donate. And he's the only one who was not furnished by anything from the plantation. Of all the people we knew. And during the strike, some of the people we know that were church workers, they did side with the plantation. But he never did. He said, "No,"

GG: Do you know, though, if he was against the idea of the strike on principle?

JC: Maybe on principles, I think he had. That's why he didn't want to

meddle with them, because he cannot reconcile his feeling.

And that's why the plantation---talking about Social Security now. In the beginning, only the teachers had the Social Security first. The ministers and all other employees did not have anything. So anyway, because he does so much for the plantation, the welfare part, like some people come to us any time of the day--and it doesn't matter, not only from Koloa. They all come from all over. When they had problems they used to come. And especially when I start work, I started working and I had more contact, because he does not go to the plantations except for Koloa. People would come early in the morning. And in that hours, our bedroom is in front, near the steps. I could hear somebody talking. So I'd get up, go and I see them. They'd apologize and say, "Oh, I'm very sorry we came so early...." because, they depended on me. Because my husband wouldn't understand them. "Because if we come later, you won't be home."

(Laughter)

"So we come real early so we can catch you."

So I tell them come inside and I say, "What's the problem?" Sometimes the children, sometimes the family, sometimes the neighbors. So I explain to them when they come and, "What shall we do?" When they get into trouble.

Anyway, the plantation still, well they ask my husband if he gets all the money they are contributing. Of course, he says, "This is how much I get from the Board."

So one of them, the bookkeeper said, "Why don't we ask part of what we send and give to him direct." That's how he got a little social security when he retired. Because the pension board, you had to be 65 when you start on getting (your check). [Congregational pension board] It's only how much--in those days--how much was contributed then...

GG: Come back to you?

JC: Yeah. So that's how he got social security when he was retiring. Because ministers anyway need to wait until he was 65.

GG: How many other ministers were around at the time, when he was...

JC: Oh, the Methodist is different. Mr. Runes was around here then. And Mr. Umipeg was in Kaumakani. He passed away already. When he retired, he left Kauai.

GG: And was the Catholic Church in Koloa there then?

JC: Yes, yes. In those days, too, they had--at least my husband get along well with the priest. They used to have breakfast once a

month, and all the priests and the Protestant ministers and the others. And I remember they used to have nice time, you know. Eating together, they eat at the same table, and they joke and all that.

I guess Koloa had, he and our priest who had been here got along very well. I know the one in Lihue, they had hard time. Father Silverstein, you remember him? I don't know whether he was in Lihue or he was in Koloa, but one of them, he was so....just like Father Morris who used to be in Kapaa during the strike. My husband, when they had all this kind to discuss I suppose because that's their business as church workers. And this is during that strike. So Father Morris was---I don't know who advised him. Maybe some of the Filipinos who go to his church. And then, because there was some problem with some girl and he was going to send letters and all that. And he asked my husband and showed about the letters. He said, "You'd better not do that because it will cause more trouble." As if you are siding somebody. So he did listen to him. That, I remember. But I didn't see the letter.

GG: Do you know why your husband took a neutral position?

JC: Well, I suppose his four years in the Mainland had something to do too. Because where they had more....I don't know how it was, but I guess that had something to do too, because when he came, they call him just like he was a rebel. Because what he sees and what he experience when he was there was entirely different. I mean, many things were so different. And he used to express himself. I know before, they didn't believe even billiard pool, the other churches don't believe in having billiard pool in the halls that the plantation had. But in Waipahu, when he was there before he came to Kauai, he said, "Well, there must be something where the fellows, especially the single ones, where they can have recreation." So he asked the plantation if they could put billiard pool in the basement of the social center, and all that. I know many of the church people did not think that's right but he said, "No, if you don't give them anything--that is clean, because if they want to gamble, that's different. But it's just to go there and spend time and have fun. They do that in the Mainland in some churches." And so he had some of those ideas which he brought back with him.

GG: Well, maybe we can stop for today, and then....

END OF INTERVIEW

The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kauai

Volume I

ETHNIC STUDIES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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